

## TRANSCRIPT CORRECTION WITH “THE GIFT OF THE MAGI”

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Transcript correction is an example of a language-focused listening activity. This version asks students to listen for differences between an audio text and the corresponding written transcript. The target differences in this short excerpt from [“The Gift of the Magi,”](#) O. Henry’s classic short story, all relate to irregular past tense verbs. This activity is a quick way to review and reinforce grammar concepts with a listening text during lessons related to the short story.

This activity also reflects listening fluency-building principles because students perform supported listening through simultaneous use of audio and written texts, students listen to the text more than once, and the text itself has been graded for EFL learners.

Teachers can create similar transcript correction activities using any listening text in the curriculum that contains the target language feature (e.g., comparatives and superlatives, irregular forms, verb tenses, or a combination of language features).

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### LEVEL

Intermediate and above

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### LANGUAGE FOCUS

Listening and grammar

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### GOALS

Students will listen to a short audio text while reviewing the associated written transcript. The transcript contains grammatical errors that are not found in the audio text:

- While listening the first time, students will identify the differences between the two texts by marking them on the transcript.
- Students will listen again and correct the errors.
- Finally, students will analyze and classify the grammatical errors.

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### MATERIALS

- Teacher:
  - Whiteboard, chalkboard, or large pieces of paper posted on the wall
  - Markers or chalk
  - “The Gift of the Magi” looped audio clip (.mp3 – 1:59; the text will play twice)
  - Audio player (computer, tablet, mobile phone with speakers)
  - Transcript Correction Worksheet - Answers (.pdf)
- Students:
  - Pencils or pens, blank writing paper
  - Transcript Correction Worksheet (.pdf)

## PREPARATION

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- Download, test, and preview the audio clip on your audio playing device. Confirm the volume will be loud enough for the entire class to hear.
- Copy or print out the Transcription Correction Worksheet, ideally making enough copies for each student to have his/her own copy. To save paper, you can have students work in pairs and share a copy.

## PROCEDURES

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1. Tell students they are going to listen to a clip (an excerpt; a short, incomplete piece of a text) from O. Henry's "The Gift of the Magi." If using this activity after students have read the entire story, you can prompt students to provide a summary or details from the story to activate their prior knowledge before listening. The activity can also be used before students read the story to preview characters, encourage predictions, or create interest in the plot.
2. Ask student volunteers to pass out the Transcript Correction Worksheets facedown. Tell students to leave the paper facedown while you provide the instructions.
3. Explain that students will listen to the audio clip two times. The first time they will listen to the audio while following along with the written transcript on their worksheets. Tell students to underline any differences they hear between the audio and written versions.
4. Tell students the audio clip will automatically play for a second time after a pause. During their second time listening, students should correct the differences they observed in the transcript by writing the proper forms they hear on their worksheets. If needed, write the two steps in the listening phase on the board as you explain the instructions.
5. Ask students to turn over their worksheets and play the audio clip (the clip will automatically play twice).
6. After the audio clip is done playing, tell students to examine the list of words they underlined in the written transcript. Ask students to determine what the words have in common and to check their answer with a neighbor. Ask a volunteer to share their answer with the class. (Answer: they are all irregular simple past tense verbs that were incorrectly "regularized" in the transcript).
7. Ask students to provide a few additional examples of base form verbs and their irregular simple past tense forms (e.g, *go – went, sing – sang, swim – swam*). Write student examples on the board if desired. If you have noticed any previous patterns in student errors (spoken or written) with simple irregular past tense verbs, be sure to provide the base forms of the problematic verbs and elicit the irregular past tense forms from the class.

Note: If students are sharing worksheets, put students in pairs before the worksheets are passed out in Step 2. Ask student pairs to point to the differences they observe on the transcript as they listen the first time. Students can write down the correct forms on their own blank paper as they listen for the second time, and then they can discuss with their partner the answer to the final "analyze and classify" question. This approach also allows you to reuse the worksheets if you remind students not to write on them.